CHAPTER - II
CHAPTER II
THEMATISATION

2.1. The Novel

The term 'novelle' is derived from Italian. It refers to a collection of love stories in prose after Boccaccio's Decameron (1350). The term originally meant a 'fresh story' but gradually came to denote a story in prose in contrast to a story in verse which was called a romance. A novel can be called a pocket theatre because it contains all the characteristic features of drama. It is the loosest form of literary art, and its very freedom from all limitations allows it to give a fuller representation of life, character, etc. Many hundreds of new novels appear every year, but their literary standard is not as a rule, a high one, for as W.H. Hudson (1841-1922) remarks 'any one can write a novel who has pens, ink and paper at command, and a certain amount of leisure and patience'. It is nonetheless a very effective medium for the portrayal of human thought and action . . . 

2.1.1. Themes in a Novel

Those individuals who observe life, exercise independent thinking through various view points and portray them skillfully in their own, style shine as writers. Their keen sense of perception of, about the social, political, cultural, religious, domestic phenomena enables them to present life in an astute manner. A novelist takes up the essence of reality and recreates it in his / her own fashion. It is the theme that invariably inspires an artist. The novelist's canvas is usually very broad and accommodates a plurality of themes and motifs. Though characters, narrative, setting etc. are of importance in a novel they are invariably determined by the theme. Certain basic feelings are common to all societies. They are those pertaining to birth, death, hunger, sex, etc. So themes may be socio-political including social reform, satire,
didactic elements, etc. or sentimental themes that express varying psychological moods, reunion of estranged ones, melodrama, humour and other emotional aspects of life. Themes may be those based on fantasy, including superstition, supernatural elements, suspense, imagination, dreams, chance, or fate, mystery, science, fables, crime or those taken from Puranas, Upanishads epics and folk-tales.

2.1.2. Characteristics of a Novel

a. A novel is primarily a tale and must constitute a good plot which may be loose and incoherent or closely knit.

b. It has characters, i.e., men and women who carry on the action and to whom things happen and their conversation constitutes the dialogue.

c. It has a scene and time of action, i.e., the place and time where different things happen to different characters. The area may be limited or not and the plot may cover a large span of time, covering a number of cities and countries.

d. Often there is realism in its treatment of life and its problems which distinguish it from earlier romances. The novel also reflects the very spirit of the age in which it is written.

e. It exhibits the author's views of life and provides the author's criticism regarding certain events, problems situations etc.

2.1.3. Types of Novels

The various types of novels are the picaresque novel which narrates the story of a man who begins in poor circumstances and climbs the social ladder until he reaches the top, the panoramic novel which presents a comprehensive picture of men and manners of contemporary society, the historical novel in which the novelist takes certain events from history and weaves around them a fictitious enhancement. There is the novel of social reform and it aims to focus public attention on the social evils
prevalent in the age. The regional novel is one which depicts the physical feature, life, customs, manners, history, etc. of some particular region or locality. It concentrates on some particular region and is remarkable for its vivid and illuminating presentation of the geographical features. These features form the background or setting to the human drama enacted in the novel. E.g., certain hills, rivers, tales etc re-appear again and again. Another type of novel is the psychological novel which analyses the motives, impulses and mental processes which move his / her characters to act in a particular way. Coming to the modern times we have the stream of consciousness novel which shares some properties of the psychological novel. This novel depicts the flux of emotions and sensations passing through the consciousness of a character, without any organisation or ordering on the part of the novelist.

2.1.4. Point of view

Point of view has received much critical attention in recent years. The fundamental feature of analysis involves probe into the plot, characterization, setting, and the method of narration or point of view from which novelists tell their stories. The novelist can either tell his / her story from inside or make one of the characters do it or tell it from the outside, as an omniscient author. While choosing either of the methods by the novelist care is taken to consider the focus of the story, with regard to its characters and their relations, plot and structure and their meaning as a whole. Though the direct method is considered to be most simple it can present the story only through the eyes of the narrator or the narrator's point of view only. Whereas in the third person narrative the novelist is omniscient and can swing his / her point of view among the characters. Thus eliminating single stream narration. Some times while adapting third person narration the novelist may tell the tale in a sequential form with views of many characters from shifting points. Importance is given to the character who is prominent in that particular description. In the other method the novelist may
restrict the point of view to one or two characters and describe only those features which are related to them.

Arundhati Roy has used third-person narration in *The God of Small Things* and the point of view centers around the twins Estha and Rahel. The distinct narrative voice often centers around Rahel and large spaces of the text are filled with descriptions related to the twins. One feels it is 'told endearingly through the stream of consciousness of a small girl' (Donald Eichert, 1983, quoted from Shlomith Rimmonkenan). The point of view is multi focal because there are several stages where, while Estha and Rahel are not present, the omniscient narration spins its web. Thus the authorial comments which slip in and out of the narrative add it to the charm. These comments justify an action or provide hints as to what follows. Sometimes suspense is revealed to us like an aside.

The point of view of narration has resulted in observance of certain distinct features like repetitions, deliberate mis-spellings, single sentence paragraphs and one-word sentences, etc.

2.2. Narrative

Narrative permeates our lives in the form of history books, newspaper reports, novels, films, comic strips, etc. By narrative fiction, we can take into account short stories, poem or a novel. The term narration suggests (a) a communication process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addressers to addressees and (b) the verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message. It is this that distinguishes narrative fiction from narratives in other media, such as film, dance, or pantomime. Since the text is a spoken or written discourse, it implies someone who speaks or writes it. The act or process of production is narration. Narration can be considered as both
real and fictional. In the empirical world, the author is the agent responsible for the production of narratives. It is through text that the reader acquires knowledge of the story (its object) and of the narration (the process of its production).

'Story' designates the narrated events, abstracted from their deposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events. While 'story' is a succession of events, 'text' is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling. In the text that we read, the events may not necessarily appear in chronological order, the events as dispersed, and all the items of the narrative content are filtered through some Prism or perspective ('focalizer'). The story is not directly available to the reader. It is made up of separable components, and has the potential of forming networks of internal relations. A story is an abstraction from (1) the specific style of the text in question, (2) the language in which the text is written and (3) the medium or sign-system (Pierce, 1973). The presence or absence of a story is what distinguishes narrative from non-narrative texts. However, non-story elements may be found in a narrative text. A novel may include the description of a cathedral, and the description of a cathedral, say in a guide book, may include the story of its construction.

2.2.1. Models of narrative

Novels are made of different types and classes of prose – formal description, meditative reflection, speech, dialogue, letters; but at a local level each different stylistic register is likely to have more in common with the functional, metonymic dimension of style than with the perversities of poetry. Consequently, the stylistics of prose fiction, while giving due attention to localized effects, is particularly concerned with the ways in which different registers and forms of prose can be assembled as a single text which tells a story and which establishes a certain mode of formal
coherence. The two formalists who have made the most significant contributions to theories of fiction and narrative are Viktor Shklovsky (1917) and Vladimir Propp (1928).

2.2.2. Shklovsky

Shklovsky (1917) reduced fictional structures to two opposing and interactive dimensions: sjuzet (narrative devices) and fabula (the story; what novel is about). Fabula refers to the actuality and chronological sequence of the events that make up the narrative; and sjuzet to the order, manner and style in which they are presented in the novel in question. The fabula of Dicken's *Great Expectations* (1861) concerns the experiences in and around London, from the early childhood of Pip. Its sjuzet involves the presentation of these events in Pip's first person account of their temporal, spatial and emotional registers. In Dickens' novel, the first person manner of the sjuzet has the effect of personalizing the fabula; Pip's description of Miss Havisham and of his relationship with Estella are necessarily influenced by factors such as his own emotional affiliations, his stylistic habits and his singular perspective on spatio-temporal sequences and conditions. If *Great Expectations* had an omniscient, third person narrator, we might learn more about the events that contributed to Miss Havisham's condition and we might be offered a more impartial multidimensional perspective on the relationship between Pip and Estella.

2.2.3. Propp

Propp in *The Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) shifts our attention towards the ways in which social and behavioural structure influence and determine fictional narrative. Propp devised a grammar of the folktale based on two concepts: the roles filled up by the characters (the kidnapper as villain, the princess as the kidnapped person, the king as provider, etc) and the functions they perform in the plot. In a fairy
tale several characters might be involved in a single function (the king and kidnapper might be involved in villainous activities) or one character might perform a number of functions (the king might be both hero and villain). This scheme is comparable with Jakobson's division between the syntagmatic axis of language (villain, hero, helper, etc. created narrative sequences in the same way that noun, verb and adjective create syntactic units) and its paradigmatic axis (king and hero can be substituted by certain functional roles in the same way that the verbs walk, stroll or stride are substitutable in the same place in a sentence). Both models are constrained by the agreed relation between language / narrative and perceptions of the real world. The sentence 'the tree ate its dinner and then walked home' is grammatically correct, but its paraphrasable message is implausible and absurd. Similarly a folktale in which a princess kidnaps her father, the king, in the hope of eliciting a ransom from the villain would be absurd because it distorts the usual realm of possibilities within the social – familial network of roles and functions in the non-fictional world.

2.2.4. Greimas

A.J. Greimas (1966, 1970) regards narrative patterns as involving systems of consecutive ordering very similar to the syntagm, while arguing that fictional narratives reflect the deep-rooted 'grammars' of human society: syntagmes contractuels – formal contracts, family bonds, close relationships, institutional ties; syntagmes performanciels – trials, arguments, the performance of tasks; syntagmes disjonctionnels physical movements, departures, arrivals, etc. Just as in the syntagmatic chain of a sentence each word and phrase is tied into an accumulative sequence which generates larger units of meaning, so in a novel single incidents such as marriages, commitments to specific professions and journeys are combined to produce extended narrative structures. Tzvetan Todorov in his analysis of Boccaccio's Decameron (1969) extends this parallel between syntax and narrative by reducing the latter to parts of speech.
(characters are nouns, their attributes adjectives, and their actions verbs), propositions involving one or more of the characters (A has an affair with B; D divorces Y) and sequences in which a string of propositions makes up the complete narrative structure.

### 2.2.5. Labov

Labov (1972) defines a natural narrative as a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is implied) actually occurred. A minimal narrative can be defined as a sequence of two clauses which are temporarily ordered: that is, a change in their order will result in a change in the temporal sequence of narrative categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Signals that a story is about to begin and draws attention from the listener; gives some idea what the story is going to be about</td>
<td>Normally a short summarizing statement, provided before the narrative commences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Helps the listener to identify the time, place, persons, activity and situation (<em>i.e.</em>, the 'who, what, when, where' of the story)</td>
<td>Often characterized by past continuous verb forms and adverbs of time, manner and place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complicating action</td>
<td>The core narrative category providing the 'what happened' element of a story.</td>
<td>Realised by narrative clauses which are temporally ordered and normally have a verb in the simple past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Recapitulates the final events of a story (<em>i.e.</em>, the 'what finally happened element').</td>
<td>Comprises the last of the narrative clauses which begin the complicating action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Functions to make the point of the story clear, to ward off responses such as 'so what'?</td>
<td>Marked by a number of different linguistic forms. Includes evaluative commentary; embedded speech; comparisons with unrealized events; departure from basic narrative grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>Signals that a story has ended; brings listener back to the point at which he or she entered narrative</td>
<td>No specific linguistic features, although frequently a generalized statement which is timeless in character.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With the exception of evaluation, the categories listed above are arranged in the sequence in which they would occur in a typical narrative. Evaluation is situated outside the central pattern and can be inserted at virtually any stage during a narrative. A fully formed narrative realises all six categories, although many narratives may lack one or more components.

2.3. Motifs in *The God of Small Things*

Based on the models discussed earlier, an attempt can be made to unveil the layers of meaning and devices used by the novelist to trace the theme(s) or motifs in the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy.

To speak in terms of Shklovsky (1917), the interacting elements in *The God of Small Things* is the third person narrative (narrative device) with the fabula (the story) which is presented. The 'sjuzet' centers mostly around the seven year old child Rahel and through her eyes and memory, the past experiences of a family are paraded. The fabula consists of the tragedy in the lives of a mother, her twins and her lover. The manner of the 'sjuzet' has personalized the story and we are left to identify the story with the author's own biography. The 'sjuzet' does not depend upon Rahel for its narration but moves in and out of various situations with ease. So she is not the novelist's spokesman but the omniscient aspect centers around her. We realise the socio-economic, moral and other dimensions of the fabula gradually.

*The God of Small Things* is a story which contains the stories of many people. A thematic study reveals that there is a characteristic pattern in the lives of certain characters especially with regard to marriage. This reminds us of Propp's example
(Propp, 1968). Functions may remain constant even when the identity of the performer changes. Compare, for instance the following events:

1. A Tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom.
2. An old man gives Sucenko a horse. The horse carries Sucenko away to another kingdom.
3. A sorcerer gives Iván a little boat. The boat takes Iván to another kingdom.
4. A princess gives Iván a ring. Young men appearing from out of the ring carry Iván away into another kingdom, and so forth.

2.3.1. Marriages

As far as the novel *The God of Small Things* is concerned, failure in marriage is a constant feature in the lives of certain characters, namely, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Chacko, Ammu and Rahel. There is failure of human relationships particularly failure of marriage. None of the marriages covering three generations of people belonging to the Ayemenem house is successful. The marriages of Mammachi, Ammu and Rahel, love of Baby Kochamma for Father Mullignan etc., are all blighted. Whether it is a marriage of convenience, love, or necessity is filled with void. Thus, based on Propp's model, the function (marriage) is a constant among the characters. It is only the identity of the people involved that is different. The results of their marriage are the same, that is, failure. Thus, all marital relationships and efforts to love end in failure. Even Ammu's love for Velutha, the twins' love for Velutha, Mammachi's love for Chacko, Chacko's love for Sophie Mol (his daughter) are also not fruitful.

2.3.2. Lost Dreams

The novel is a saga of lost dreams from several points of view. Almost all the characters; Pappachi, Baby Kochamma, Chacko and Ammu have experienced loss.
Three generations of people in the Ayemenem house suffer. Everyone is drawn into the vortex of doom.

2.3.3. Classicism / Taboo

The novel can be said to be a champion of Dalits and a protest against taboo-breaking. Velutha who is the hero / scapegoat is a representative of the untouchables in the novel. Mammachi said that during her childhood for people of his class, even to walk on public roads was taboo. They were supposed to cover their mouth while speaking so as to prevent their polluted breath from reaching the upper class person to whom they spoke. In a country like India major issues are resolved on the basis of caste, Arundhati Roy uses classicism as the fabric of the plot. Velutha broke the age old taboo by loving an upper caste woman and she, vice versa.

2.3.4. Regionalism

*The God of Small Things* can be called a Regional Novel in the sense that the center of the plot involves in and around Kerala. The geography of Kerala, life of keralites, their rituals and rites, patriarchal tradition, caste conscious mentality, inclination towards Marxism etc., are presented in a vivid manner. One is aware of the author's intimate knowledge of scape she uses for her background.

2.3.5. Feminist

*The God of Small Things* specially presents the sufferings of women. It highlights the sorrow of three generations of women – Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Ammu, Margaret and Rahel. Mammachi is a neglected, tormented wife of a jealous maleficent man, Baby Kochamma a warped jealous spinster as a result of unrequited love, Ammu a divorcee who was forced to commit adultery by her husband and Rahel a
divorcee because her guilt ridden soul could not find solace in the love offered by Larry MacCaslin.

2.3.6. Irony

Arundhati Roy is at her best in scattering ironical bits all the way down the plot. There are lots of ironic contradictions in the novel. Lenin the son of a Marxist champion K.N.M. Pillai works for capitalists. Father Mullignan whose purpose of visiting India was to denounce Hinduism intellectually becomes a saffron clad sanyasi. The haunted History house and Namboodripad's ancestral home are converted into luxury hotels to serve the capitalists and the hotel is named 'Heritage'. To add to it Kathakali which is a heritage of India is truncated into cheap cameos in order to entertain the capitalists while they are at leisure by the swimming pool. The Meenachal river which played a vital role in the fate of Velutha, Sophie, Rahel, Estha and Ammu is now nothing more than a drain. Margaret who had divorced Chacko comes to his house to get over the death of her second husband and loses her daughter also during her visit. To add to all the above there is Ammu who refused to commit adultery with an Englishman chooses to commit the same with an untouchable.

2.3.7. Satire

*The God of Small Things* is also a satire which focuses on the yawning gap between the ideal and reality. The satire is not only aimed at Marxism but Christianity also. Comrade Pillai and Baby Kochamma are the vehicles. While Comrade Pillai spoke reams about equality among labourers he did not like or relish the importance which Velutha gained as a card holding member of the Communist party. The Ipe family were benevolent towards the downtrodden but they built separate schools for the untouchables.
2.3.8. Betrayal

The novel is criss crossed with channels of betrayal. Love in variety, whether it is paternal love, filial love, political, religious or moral integrity all result in betrayal. Ammu, Estha and Rahel betray Velutha, Baby Kochamma her religion, Father Mullignan his mission, Chacko his mother. Even love between Ammu and Velutha is a betrayal of class loyalty and feminine chastity.

2.3.9. Transgression and Incest

In a way *The God of Small Things* is a story of crime and punishment. All the characters who break the rules and restrictions enforced by class, religion and society are punished. They carry the Karmic weight. The major caste taboos are broken. The caste system in India is not only structural, but has cultural dimension as well. The Brahmin (Priestly Class), Kshatriya (Warrior Caste), Vaishya (trading and artisan castes) and at the bottom the sudra (agricultural labourers) others beyond these are known as untouchables. The same hierarchy is maintained for marrying within groups. Culturally it is believed that the circumstances of birth and life on this earth is the result of one's karma in the previous birth. In such a caste system birth plays a vital role in the life of an individual. This rigid system lays down 'love laws'. *The God of Small Things* is the conflict between the defenders and offenders of these laws. The opponents are individualized modern educated people, who suffer from contradictory desires, emotions, etc.

2.4. Analysis of *The God of Small Things* on Labovian Model

All the motifs enumerated above are woven in the novel in an intricate manner. Thus the novel is rich in thematic content and the method of narration complements it. The moral and social aspects are not dictated to the reader through the narrator's spokesman or the omniscient narrator but through the events. The events / incidents in
the fabula blend with the sjuzet to bring the effect. A cursory reading of the novel enables one to identify those passages which illustrate the interaction of the sjuzet within the fabula and enables classification on the basis of Labov's (1972) model.

2.4.1. Abstract

This category signals that a story is about to begin and draws attention from the listener / reader and gives some idea about what the story is going to be about. Usually, these may be in the form of short summarizing statements provided before the narrative commences. Selected instances of such passages in the narrative are:

-May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen, Jack fruits burst. Dissolute blue-bottles hum vacuously in the fruity air (1).

-But by early June the south – west monsoon breaks and there are three months of wind and water with short spells of sharp glittering sunshine that thrilled children snatch to play with (1).

"... it was a skyblue day in December sixty-nine (the nineteen silent). It was the kind of time in the life of a family when something happens to nudge its hidden morality from its resting place and make it bubble to the surface and float for a while. In clear view. For everyone to see"(35).

The above instances create the situation for the beginning of a story by presenting the climatic conditions of a place. This introduction signals that the narrative is going to enumerate a tale related to the place called Ayemenem. In the second passage the month and year serve as a landmark and forbodes that the secret
entrails of people's minds are to be revealed and there were skeletons in people's cupboards.

2.4.2. Orientation

This category enables the listener / reader to identify the time, place, person, activity and situation (i.e., the 'who, what, when, where' of the story). These passages are often characterized by past continuous verb forms and adverbs of time, manner and place.

It was raining when Rahel came back to Ayemenem.

The house itself looked empty. The doors and windows were locked. The front verandah bare. Unfurnished. But the skyblue Plymouth with chrome tailfins was still parked outside, and inside, Baby Kochamma was still alive.

She was Rahel's baby grand aunt, her grand father's younger sister.

Rahel had come to see her brother, Estha. They were two-egg twins (2).

The Government never paid for Sophie Mol's funeral because she wasn't killed on a zebra crossing. She had hers in Ayemenem in the old church with the new paint.

She was visiting from England (4).

Though Ammu, Estha and Rahel were allowed to attend the funeral, they were made to stand separately, not with the rest of the family. Nobody would look at them (5).

Estha stood close to her, barely awake, his aching eyes glittering like glass, his burning check against the bare skin of Ammu's trembling hymnbook – holding arm (5).

Rahel, on the other hand, was wide awake, fiercely vigilant and brittle with exhaustion from her battle against Real Life (5).
By then Esthappen and Rahel had learned that the world had other ways of breaking men. They were already familiar with the smell. Sicksweet. Like old roses on a breeze (6).

After the funeral Ammu took the twins back to the Kottayam police station. They were familiar with the place. They had spent a good part of the previous day there.

Ammu asked for the Station House Officer and when she was shown into his office, she told him that there had been a terrible mistake and that she wanted to make a statement. She asked to see Velutha. (7)

He said the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from Veshyas or their illegitimate children. (8)

Her face was set like stone, but tears welled up in her eyes and ran down her rigid cheeks. (8)

'He's dead', 'Ammu whispered to him. 'I've killed him'. (8)

Further away, in the wind and rain, on the banks of the river, in the sudden thunderdarkness of the day, Estha was walking. He was wearing a crushed - strawberry - pink T-shirt, drenched darker now, and he knew that Rahel had come. (10)

Estha had always been a quiet child, so no one could pinpoint with any degree of accuracy exactly when (the year, if not the month or day) he had stopped talking. (10)

Slowly, over the years, Estha withdrew from the world. (12)

Now that he'd been re-Returned, Estha walked all over Ayemenem. (13)

Sometimes Estha walked past Lucky Press - old Comrade K.N.M. Pillai's Printing Press, once the Ayemenem office of the Communist Party, where midnight study meetings were held, and pamphlets with rousing lyrics of Marxist Party songs
were printed and distributed. The flag that fluttered on the roof had grown limp and old. The red had bled away. (13)

Though his part in the whole thing had by no means been a small one, Comrade Pillai didn't hold himself in any way personally responsible for what had happened. He dismissed the whole business as the Inevitable Consequence of Necessary Politics. (14)

It had been quiet in Estha's head until Rahel came. But with her she had brought the sound of passing trains, and the light and shade that falls on you if you have a window seat. The world, locked out for years, suddenly flooded in, and now Estha couldn't hear himself for the noise. (15)

Baby Kochamma and Kochu Maria, the vinegar-hearted, short-tempered, midget cook, were the only people left in the Ayemenem house when Estha was re-Returned. Mammachi, their grandmother, was dead. Chacko lived in Canada now, and ran an unsuccessful antiques business. (15)

As for Rahel.

After Ammu died (after the last time she came back to Ayemenem, swollen with cortisone and a rattle in her chest that sounded like a faraway man shouting), Rahel drifted. (15)

In matters related to the raising of Rahel, Chacko and Mammachi tried, but couldn't. They provided the care (food, clothes, fees), but withdrew the concern. (15)

When she finished school, she won admission into a mediocre college of Architecture in Delhi. (17)

She spent eight years in college without finishing the five-year undergraduate course and taking her degree. (17)

She occasionally wrote to Chacko and Mammachi, but never returned to Ayemenem. Not when Mammachi died. Not when Chacko emigrated Canada. (18)
Rahel drifted into marriage like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge. (18)

After they were divorced, Rahel worked for a few months as a waitress in an Indian restaurant in New York. (20)

Then Baby Kochamma wrote to say that Estha had been re-Returned. Rahel gave up her job at the gas station and left America gladly. To return to Ayemenem. To Estha in the rain. (20)

Three days before the Terror, he had let them paint his nails with red Cutex that Ammu had discarded. That's the way he was the day History visited them in the back verandah. (190)

A pair of actors trapped in a recondite play with no hint of plot or narrative. Stumbling through their parts, nursing someone else's sorrow. Grieving someone else's grief. (191)

Unable, somehow, to change plays. Or purchase, for a fee, some cheap brand exorcism from a counsellor with a fancy degree, who would sit them down and say, in one of many ways: 'You're not the Sinners. You're the Sinned Against. You were only children. You had no control. You are the victims, not the perpetrators'. (191)

Esthappen and Rahel both knew that there were several perpetrators (besides themselves) that day. But only one victim. And he had blood-red nails and a brown leaf on his back that made the monsoons come on time. (191)

The bedroom with blue curtains and yellow wasps that worried the window panes. The bedroom whose walls would soon learn their harrowing secrets. The bedroom into which Ammu would first be locked and then lock herself. Whose door, Chacko, crazed by grief, four days after Sophie Mol's funeral, would batter down (224 & 225). 'Pack your things and go', Chacko would say, stepping over the debris Looming over them (226).
The passages chosen from the novel as part of orientation are spread over chapters-one, nine and eleven. These passages enable the reader / listener to pickout or place the important characters like Rahel, Estha, Sophie, Ammu, Chacko etc. It is possible to make out that they are the chief characters and that Ammu and Sophie are dead at the time of commencement of the narrative. The situation is tension in the family as a result of Sophie's death and Ammu, Estha and Rahel share some relation to it. The theme of suffering is elaborated through Estha's withdrawal and Rahel's inconsistent life. Ammu is dead and Estha and Rahel, we are informed are guilt ridden because they have been responsible for Velutha's death. The reader is able to fit these pieces together and come to a conclusion that because of Sophie's death, Velutha was in police custody and died. Ammu, Rahel and Estha feel guilty for it and Ammu was threatened to leave the house by Chacko.

2.4.3. Complicating Action

This category provides the 'what happened' element of a story. They may be realised by narrative clauses which are temporaries ordered and normally have verb in the simple past. The complication action refers to the climax of the plot. It narrates the crux of the plot. It is the vortex of any narration and the resolution and coda depend on the nature of complication.

In those early amorphous years when memory had only just begun, when life was full of Beginnings and no Ends, and Everything was For Ever, Esthappen and Rahel thought of themselves together as Me, and separately, individually, as We or Us. (2)

Now, these years later, Rahel has a memory of waking up one night giggling at Estha's funny dream, (2) she has other memories too that she has so right to have. (2)

And these are only the small things. (3)
And now, twenty-three years later, their father had re-Returned Estha. He had sent him back to Ayemenem with a suitcase and a letter. (9)

It hadn’t changed, the June Rain. (10)

Perhaps, Ammu, Estha and she were the worst transgressors. (31)

They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much. The laws that make grandmothers grandmothers, uncles uncles, mothers mothers, cousins cousins, jam jam and jelly jelly. (31)

Even before Sophie Mol’s funeral, the police found Velutha. (31)

After it was all over, Baby Kochamma said, 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap' (31)

Little Ammu

Who never completed her corrections.

Who had to pack her bags and leave. Because she had no Locust Stand I. Because Chacko said she had destroyed enough already. (159)

Of course they did not even remotely suspect that the missile, when it was fired, the one that would annihilate the family’s Good Name for ever, would come from a completely unexpected quarter. (168)

The passages selected for complicating action provide the knowledge that all the guilt and sufferings have resulted because Ammu, Estha and Rahel have transgressed. They clearly indicate that both Rahel and Estha lived with Ammu and because of transgression in love Ammu was forced to leave and Estha sent back to their father and that Rahel and Estha meet after 23 years. These instances enable us to make out that the memory of Sophie and Velutha’s death is still afresh in Estha’s mind. Though everyone in the family tampered with the love laws, Ammu, Estha and Rahel were the ones who suffered more. The fact that their suffering extends even after 23 years enables us to understand that suffering is the crux of the issue.
2.4.4. Resolution

The resolution recapitulates the final events of a story. It enables one to trace the aftermath of the climax. Clues are provided as to why the events became complicated and how they were resolved. In the narrative, it describes how each character resolved to cope with the complications.

Anyway, now she (Rahel) thinks if Estha and Rahel as Them, because separately, the two of them are no longer what They were or ever thought They'd be. Ever. (I)

'She (Margaret) was haunted by that decision for as long as she lived. She took with her to her grave the picture of her little daughter's body laid out on the chaise lounge in the drawing room of the Ayemenem House. (251)

Ammu was still locked into her bedroom. Baby Kochamma had the keys. (252)

He told Mammachi what he had seen. The story of a little boat that crossed the river night after night, and who was in it. (255)

The lovers. Sprung from his loins and hers. His son and her daughter. They had made the unthinkable thinkable and the impossible really happen (256).

There was no storm – music. No whirlpool spun up from the inky depths of the Meenachal. No shark supervised the tragedy. Just a quiet handing over ceremony. A boat spilling its cargo. A river accepting the offering. One small life (293).

In the years to come they would replay this scene in their heads. As children. As teenagers. As adults (318).

This was the stuff their dreams were made of. On the day that Estha was Returned. Chalk. Blackboards. Proper punishments. They didn't ask to be let off lightly. They only asked for punishments that fitted their crimes. Not ones that came like cupboards with built-in bedrooms. Not ones you spent your whole life in, wandering through its maze of shelves (326).
The passages selected reveal how Rahel thought of herself and her twin brother are someone different because their suffering had modified their psyche. Clues for Margaret blaming herself for Sophie’s death are provided. There are also ripples of memories about how Vellya Pappen narrated the story of Ammu and Velutha and Sophie’s death. As a grownup woman, Rahel could analyse the past events and could trace the reason for her suffering.

2.4.5. Evaluation

Its function is to make the point of the story clear. The sentences selected for evaluation provide us with a spectator’s view of why the actions have taken place. It enables us to evaluate whose action set the ball rolling.

In a purely practical sense it would probably be correct to say that it all began when Sophie Mol came to Ayemenem (32).

Still, to say that it all began when Sophie Mol came to Ayemenem is only a way of looking at it. (33)

Equally, it could be argued that it actually began thousands of years ago. It could be argued that it began long before Christianity arrived in a boat and seeped into Kerala like tea from a tea bag (33).

They didn't know then, that soon they would go in. That they would cross the river and be where they weren't supposed to be, with a man they weren't supposed to love. That they would watch with dinner - plate eyes as history revealed itself to them in the back verandah. (55)
All the sentences which provide evaluative remarks are omniscient comments by the narrator which provide clues that Sophie's arrival, advent of Christianity, transgression, etc., were the reason for the tragic deaths and sufferings of people.

2.4.6. Coda

The coda signals that a story has ended and brings the reader back to the point at which he or she entered the narrative. The coda completes the circle. We are provided with the final events. The sentences selected provide clues that Rahel was now a mature woman. She could reason out her past with the objectivity of a spectator. The quotes from the last chapter signal whatever happiness they shared between them, Ammu and Velutha had paid a very high price for such a short period. They had laid the lives of two children at the anvil of fate.

Their lives have a size and a shape now. Estha has his and Rahel hers. (3)

Her co-passenger's madness comforted Rahel. It drew her closer into New York's deranged womb. Away from the other, more terrible thing that haunted her. A sour mental smell, like steel bus rails, and the smell of the bus conductor's hands from holding them. A young man with an old man's mouth. (72)

They looked at each other. They weren't thinking any more. The time for that had come and gone. Smashed smiles lay ahead of them. But that would be later. (334)

The cost of living climbed to unaffordable heights; though later, Baby Kochamma would say it was a small Price to Pay. Was it? Two lives. Two children's childhoods. And a history lesson for future offenders (336).

Since the narrative is of stream of consciousness technique and omniscient there is no chronological or linear movement of the plot and theme. The point of view is also
multifaceted. So there is no particular complicating action followed by resolution, evaluation and coda. The passages which provide such inclinations are taken as instances from all the chapters. Hence, a passage which recapitulates the final events of the story finds place in the first few pages of the narrative. The coda or the utterance which evaluates the end or the final event of the plot and theme related aspect occurs in the first chapter. Thus the theme and point of view of the narrative can be unearthed layer by layer after few readings of the text. The theme is brought out through socio-political hierarchies and adult versus children (big vs. small) relationships. The novel is a kaleidoscope of themes and motifs. The points of view of each character add a new dimension to the theme. Sophie Mol and Velutha's death is the pivot of all other events. Out of the twenty one chapters ten consist of less than ten pages each. The lengthiest are the first and the second consisting of 32 and 49 pages respectively.

2.5. Conclusion

The thematic ply traces the past of the characters and highlights their future desires. So the past and future spring at unexpected places. The narrator's voice remains impersonal as it unfolds the tale. Yet there is soul-dissection, as in a dramatic monologue. The theme of guilt and taboo are brought out at pre-speech level of thought and emotion. The novelist places us within the minds of the characters and shows what happens at the unconscious and sub-conscious levels.